

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 1820

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, LA
SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MANEUVERING ON VIENTIANE 1973 AGREEMENT

1. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT PHOUI SANANIKONE'S SON- IN- LAW, MANORAK LUANGKHOT, CALLED ON DCM MARCH 13 APPARENTLY TO TAKE SOUNDINGS ON USG POSITION VIS- A- VIS POSSIBLE EFFORT TO SUBJECT VIENTIANE AGREEMENT TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RATIFICATION.
 2. MANORAK SAID THAT PHOUI HAD TOLD HIM SOUVANNA HAD BEEN ENJOINED BY KING DURING HIS VISIT TO LUANG PRABANG OVER THE WEEKEND TO SECURE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY APPROVAL OF VIENTIANE 1973 AGREEMENT. MANORAK SAID ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE WILL MEET MARCH 15 TO CONSIDER WHETHER EXTRAORDINARY SESSION SHOULD BE CONVENED TO RATIFY AGREEMENT OR WHETHER STANDING COMMITTEE SHOULD SIMPLY CALL ON SOUVANNA TO EXPLAIN AGREEMENT TO THEM. MANORAK SAID HE ANTICIPATED THAT DEPUTIES WOULD EVENTUALLY RATIFY AGREEMENT IF FORMER COURSE WERE CHOSEN BUT HE ANTICIPATED THERE WOULD BE TIME- CONSUMING DELAYS INVOLVED.
 3. DCM TOLD MANORAK THAT US GOVT STOOD FIRMLY BEHIND IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH AGREEMENT BY ALL PARTIES CONCERNED. DCM SAID LAOS AGREEMENT IS INTEGRAL PART OF OVERALL INDOCHINA SETTLEMENT AND ANY EFFORT TO TURN CLOCK BACK IN LAOS BY OVERTURNING LAOS AGREEMENT WOULD RESULT IN CHAOS. DCM SAID WE EXPECTED RESPONSIBLE LEADERS LIKE PHOUI AND HIS BROTHER NGON SANANIKONE TO EXERT MAXIMUM INFLUENCE TO KEEP DEPUTIES FROM
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ADVANCING THEIR PERSONAL AND GROUP INTERESTS AT EXPENSE OF LAO NATIONAL INTEREST.

4. FOLLOWING MANORAK' S CALL, DCM TELEPHONED RLG CHIEF NEGOTIATOR PHENG PHONGSAVAN TO INQUIRE ABOUT SUBJECT. PHENG SAID THAT SOUVANNA HAD TOLD HIM KING HAD CLEARLY IMPLIED DURING LUANG PRABANG MEETING THAT DISCUSSION OF AGREEMENT WITH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WOULD BE DESIRABLE. PHENG INDICATED REGULAR WEEKLY CABINET MEETING MARCH 14 WOULD EXAMINE ALTERNATIVES WHETHER PRIME MINISTER WILL SIMPLY EXPLAIN AGREEMENT TO PERMANENT COMMITTEE OR ACTUALLY SUBMIT IT TO EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF ASSEMBLY FOR RATIFICATION. PHENG THOUGHT LATTER COURSE WOULD BE DANGEROUS AND HE PRESUMES SOUVANNA WILL OPT FOR EXPLANATION.

5. COMMENT: WE DO NOT CONSIDER THIS A THREAT TO AGREEMENT AT THIS POINT BUT WILL MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO THOSE ELEMENTS WHICH INFLUENCE GROUPS OF DEPUTIES TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE AWARE WE WOULD STRONGLY DISFAVOR ANY IRRESPONSIBLE ACTION BY ASSEMBLY TO BLOCK IMPLEMENTATION OF VIENTIANE AGREEMENT.
DEAN

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